



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2011-2012

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 15 June 2011
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Questioner
Speaker Marino, Nola, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Opposition Whip) (19:24): Minister, students and families in my electorate have been very badly impacted by the changes to youth allowance and we are in an area that has been defined as inner-regional. As a result, we have families that are now trying to get two jobs, students actively deciding not to pursue higher education or training and those who have had to give up their higher education dreams and come home because they cannot actually afford to be in training or at university.

I really need to know: how many students from inner regional defined areas who have to move to study are receiving the full independent youth allowance payment? How do these figures compare to the numbers prior to the changes to youth allowance? Of the additional students now accessing independent youth allowance, how many are from inner regional areas and are actually receiving full youth allowance payments? What proportion of the new students accessing youth allowance are receiving independent versus dependent youth allowance?

I refer the minister to the review by Professor Kwong Lee Dow and want to know whether this will be reported by July, as promised? I also refer the minister to comments made by the member for Parramatta on 30 May that the government is committed to removing eligibility distinctions between inner regional and outer regional students by 1 January 2012: will this happen, and when? And will it be available to current gap year students?

Finally: yesterday the Assistant Treasurer stated that the government is also looking at changing eligibility criteria for youth allowance so that our young people who are 20 and 21 will get youth allowance rather than the unemployment benefit if they are at home. Will this come from the existing pool of funding for youth allowance or will additional funding be applied to the youth allowance program? And will this have an impact on the number of students able to access youth allowance and the actual amount they receive? Thank you.